

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A method of allocating bandwidth capacity for data frames transmitted over a SONET/SDH ring, comprising the steps of:

subdividing a payload portion of at least one of the SONET/SDH data frames comprising a SONET/SDH layer into two or more logical channels, each logical channel having associated therewith a predetermined bandwidth capacity;

assigning a protection mechanism to each logical channel;
and

monitoring the SONET/SDH ring transmission to determine protection mechanisms associated with each logical channel.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the data frames comprise a plurality of STS level one frames.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the protection mechanism comprises one of a layer 1 SONET/SDH protection mechanism and a layer 2 protection mechanism.

4. (*Currently amended*) The method of claim 3 wherein, if the protection mechanism assigned to a particular logical channel is not layer 1, the bandwidth capacity for the particular logical channel is allocated among three or more nodes comprising the SONET/SDH ring.

5. (*Original*) The method of claim 3 wherein the layer 1 protection mechanism comprises a bidirectional line switched ring protection mechanism.

6. (*Original*) The method of claim 3 wherein the layer 1 protection mechanism comprises a unidirectional path switched ring protection mechanism.

7. (*Original*) The method of claim 3 wherein the layer 2 protection mechanism comprises at least one of: an Ethernet protection mechanism, an asynchronous transport mode protection mechanism, or a time division multiplexing protection mechanism.

8. (*Currently amended*) A network node for use in a SONET/SDH ring, comprising:

a first circuit configured to subdivide a payload portion of at least one of SONET/SDH data frames comprising a SONET/SDH layer into two or more logical channels, each logical channel having associated therewith a predetermined bandwidth capacity;

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a second circuit configured to assign a protection mechanism corresponding to a SONET/SDH protection level to each logical channel; and

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a third circuit operable to monitor the SONET/SDH layer to determine protection mechanisms associated with each logical channel.

9. (*Original*) The network node of claim 8 wherein the data frames comprise a plurality of STS level one frames.

10. (*Currently amended*) The network node of claim 9 wherein the protection mechanism comprises one of a layer 1 SONET/SDH protection mechanism and a layer 2 protection mechanism.

11. (*Currently amended*) The method of claim 10 wherein, if the protection mechanism assigned to a particular logical channel is not layer 1, the bandwidth capacity for the particular logical channel is allocated among three or more nodes comprising the SONET/SDH ring.

12. (*Original*) The method of claim 10 wherein the layer 1 protection mechanism comprises a bidirectional line switched ring protection mechanism.

13. (*Original*) The method of claim 10 wherein the layer 1 protection mechanism comprises a unidirectional path switched ring protection mechanism.

14. (*Original*) The method of claim 10 wherein the layer 2 protection mechanism comprises at least one of: an Ethernet protection mechanism, an asynchronous transport mode protection mechanism, or a time division multiplexing protection mechanism.

15. (*Original*) The network node of claim 8 wherein the data frames comprise a plurality of VT-1.5 level frames.

16. (*Currently amended*) The ~~network node~~ method of claim 2 wherein the data frames comprise a plurality of non-contiguous STS level one frames.

17. (*Previously presented*) The network node of claim 9 wherein the data frames comprise a plurality of non-contiguous STS level one frames.

18. (*New*) The method of claim 1, further comprising storing data from two or more logical channels within a single one of the SONET/SDH data frames.

19. (*New*) The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more logical channels of the SONET/SDH layer are transmitted over a common carrier channel.

20. (*New*) The network node of claim 8, wherein the first circuit is further configured to store data from two or more logical channels within a single one of the SONET/SDH data frames.

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21. (New) The network node of claim 8, wherein the one or more logical channels of the SONET/SDH layer are transmitted over a common carrier channel.
